

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1-3. (Cancelled).

4. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the first and second plurality of different unrelated technology developers users exchange documents with the server via the public Internet.

5. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the patent application is filed in the patent office with a correspondence mailing address set to an address associated with the server instead of an address associated with the second plurality of users first technology developer.

6. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 5 further comprising, receiving from the patent office, paper correspondence related to the patent application that is mailed to the server system address, scanning the paper correspondence to create a scanned, electronic copy of the correspondence and storing the scanned, electronic copy of the correspondence in the document collection comprising the patent application database.

7. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 6 wherein the scanned, electronic copy of the correspondence is viewable over the Internet by at least some of the second plurality of users selected client system associated with the first technology developer.

8. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein the plurality of invention disclosures are generated by responding to questions presented to users in the first plurality of users client systems by the server via a Web page.

9. (Currently Amended) The method of claim 19 wherein documents and data associated with each invention disclosure are stored in the database and viewable over the

Internet to at least some users in the first and second plurality of users client systems as determined by an access management portion of the server.

10. (Cancelled).

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the patent application is filed in the patent office electronically in response to the request.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the patent applications is printed on a printer coupled to the server system and subsequently filed in the patent office by mail in response to the request.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 19 wherein the electronic documents include scanned versions of papers sent from a patent office.

14-18. (Cancelled).

19. (Currently Amended) A method of managing electronic documents related to a plurality of patent applications, the method comprising:

for a plurality of different and unrelated technology developers, allowing users client systems from each such technology developer to create a plurality of invention disclosures for each respective technology developer;

receiving the plurality of invention disclosures from the users from for each technology developer at a server system over a network and storing each the plurality of invention disclosures for each technology developer as in one of a plurality of collections of electronic documents and data in a database accessible computer-readable memory operatively coupled to the server system, wherein each collection is associated with one of the plurality of patent applications and assigned to at least one group that can be used in determining whether a user may access electronic documents and data in the particular collection;

storing, in the database, additional electronic documents associated with at least some of the plurality of invention disclosures for each technology developer;

maintaining and enforcing rights to electronic documents in the plurality of collections of electronic documents database such that at least some users client systems associated with each technology developer in the plurality of technology developers can access

selected ones of the electronic documents associated with invention disclosures created for the respective technology developer and such that ~~client systems~~ users associated with a particular[[ly]] technology developer cannot access electronic documents in the database associated with invention disclosures of other unrelated technology developers in the plurality of technology developers;

maintaining and enforcing rights to electronic documents in the plurality of collections of electronic documents database for ~~client systems~~ users associated with a plurality of patent firms such that at least some ~~client systems~~ users from selected ones of the patent firms have rights to view selected invention disclosures stored in the database collections and selected electronic documents stored in the database associated with the collection selected invention disclosure[[s]] is stored in and create and modify patent applications prepared for the selected invention disclosures;

receiving any such created patent application at the server system and storing it in the collection of electronic documents the respective invention disclosure is stored in database;

maintaining and enforcing rights to file patent applications in a patent office for ~~client systems~~ users associated with the plurality of law firms such that only selected ~~client systems~~ users from the law firms have rights to file patent applications in the patent office; and

electronically receiving a request from a ~~client system~~ user to file a particular patent application for a first technology developer in the plurality of technology developers, determining if the client system has appropriate rights to file the particular patent application and, if so, causing the patent application to be filed in the patent office in response to the request;

wherein each user from the plurality of different and unrelated technology developers and each user from the plurality of patent law firms is assigned to at least one group that can be used in determining whether a user may access electronic documents and data in a particular collection of electronic documents and wherein each user is assigned one or more roles that are associated with a set of permissions that can be used in determining if a user can perform a particular operation on a particular electronic document in a collection; and

wherein when a user generates a request to perform an operation on an electronic document in a particular collection of electronic documents, in response to receiving the request, determining (i) a first group to which the user is assigned; (ii) a second group to which the electronic document assigned; (iii) one or more roles to which the user is assigned. (iv) unit level access information for the particular collection of electronic documents and (v) if the user can

perform the operation on the electronic document based upon the first group to which the user is assigned, the second group to which the particular collection of electronic documents is assigned, the set of permissions associated with the one or more roles to which the user is assigned and the unit level access information for the particular collection of electronic documents.

20. (Currently Amended) A server system for managing intellectual property; the system comprising:

a processor;

a computer-readable memory database, coupled to the processor, for storing a plurality of collections of electronic documents and data related to a plurality of invention disclosures for a plurality of different and unrelated technology developers, wherein the plurality of electronic documents include invention disclosures, patent applications and additional documents associated with the invention disclosures and/or patent applications;

an invention disclosure creation component that allows ~~client systems~~ users from each of the plurality of technology developers to create invention disclosures for the respective technology developer each client system is associated with and store the invention disclosures in the database as electronic documents;

a patent application creation component that allows ~~client systems~~ users associated with a plurality of patent firms to create and modify patent applications prepared for selected invention disclosures stored in the database and store the patent applications in the database as electronic documents;

a document management and access component that maintains and enforces rights to electronic documents in the database such that, in response to receiving a request from a user to perform an operation on an electronic document in a particular collection of electronic documents, determining (i) a first group to which the user is assigned; (ii) a second group to which the electronic document assigned; (iii) one or more roles to which the user is assigned. (iv) unit level access information for the particular collection of electronic documents and (v) if the user can perform the operation on the electronic document based upon the first group to which the user is assigned, the second group to which the particular collection of electronic documents is assigned, the set of permissions associated with the one or more roles to which the user is assigned and the unit level access information for the particular collection of electronic documents (i) at least some client systems associated with each technology developer in the

~~plurality of technology developers can access selected ones of the electronic documents associated with invention disclosures created for the respective technology developer, (ii) client systems associated with a particularly technology developer cannot access electronic documents in the database associated with invention disclosures of other unrelated technology developers in the plurality of technology developers and (iii) at least some client systems from selected ones of the patent firms have rights to view selected invention disclosures stored in the database and selected electronic documents stored in the database associated with the selected invention disclosures and create and modify patent applications prepared for the selected invention disclosures; and~~

~~a patent application filing component that, in response to receiving a request from a client system user to perform an operation of filing file a particular patent application, determining if the client system has appropriate rights to file the particular patent application and, if so, causing causes the patent application to be filed in the patent office in response to the request if the document management and access component determines the user has sufficient rights to perform the filing operation.~~

21. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the electronic documents in the plurality of collections comprise word-processed document files, form-based document files and image files.

22. (New) The method of claim 21 wherein each electronic document in the plurality of collections of electronic documents has document meta data associated with the document that identifies the document.

23. (New) The method of claim 22 wherein the document meta data further identifies the history of each document.

24. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the user cannot perform the operation on the electronic document if the user is excluded by the unit level access information.

25. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the user can perform the operation on the electronic document if the user is assigned a first permission from the set of permissions related to the operation and if the unit level access information permits the user to perform the operation.

26. (New) The method of claim 19 wherein the plurality of groups is organized as a hierarchy such that a group in the plurality of groups may contain one or more other groups in the plurality of groups.

27. (New) A method of managing electronic documents related to a plurality of patent applications, the method comprising:

storing a plurality of collections of electronic documents and data on a computer-readable memory operatively coupled to a server system, each collection being associated with one of the plurality of patent applications and each collection including data and one or more electronic documents related to its respective patent application, wherein each collection is assigned to at least one group that can be used in determining whether a user may access electronic documents and data in the particular collection, and wherein the plurality of collections of electronic documents includes at least a first collection associated with a first patent application;

allowing a plurality of users to perform operations on electronic documents in the plurality of collections of electronic documents and data, wherein each user is assigned to at least one group that can be used in determining whether a user may access electronic documents and data in a particular collection of electronic documents and wherein each user is assigned one or more roles that are associated with a set of permissions that can be used in determining if a user can perform a particular operation on a particular electronic document in a collection;

receiving a request from a first user to perform an operation on an electronic document in the first collection; and

responsive to receiving the request, determining a first group to which the first user is assigned; determining a second group to which the first collection is assigned; determining one or more roles to which the first user is assigned and determining if the user can perform the operation on the electronic document in the first collection based upon the first group to which the user is assigned, the second group to which the first collection is assigned and the set of permissions associated with the one or more roles to which the user is assigned.

28. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the first collection associated with the first patent application includes unit level access information and wherein the step of

determining if the user can perform the operation on the electronic document in the first collection is further based upon the unit level access information.

29. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the plurality of groups is organized as a hierarchy such that a group in the plurality of groups may contain one or more other groups in the plurality of groups.

30. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the electronic documents in the plurality of collections comprise word-processed document files, form-based document files and image files.

31. (New) The method of claim 30 wherein each electronic document in the plurality of collections of electronic documents has document meta data associated with the document that identifies the document.

32. (New) The method of claim 31 wherein the document meta data further identifies the history of each document.

33. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the user cannot perform the operation on the electronic document if the user is excluded by the unit level access information.

34. (New) The method of claim 27 wherein the user can perform the operation on the electronic document if the user is assigned a first permission from the set of permissions related to the operation and if the unit level access information permits the user to perform the operation.